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AF/S FOR S. HILL
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN
S/CT FOR R. SHORE AND NCTC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PTER PGOV PREL ZI
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE: 2006 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 175925

¶11. (U) This cable responds to reftel request to update information for the 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

¶12. (SBU) Zimbabwe does not fit the criteria stipulated in paragraph 10 (a) and (b) of reftel instructions. Despite our strained bilateral relationship and the GOZ's self-imposed isolation on most diplomatic issues, local intelligence and criminal investigative agencies to date have been responsive to USG needs and concerns regarding terrorist issues. At Embassy request, these agencies have routinely provided assistance by conducting investigative inquiries, traces, and border checks of individuals thought to be threats to USG facilities or personnel. The government in 2004 passed the Bank Use Promotion and Suppression of Money Laundering Act, which addresses terrorist financing and authorizes the tracking and seizing of assets, and has since implemented it.

In May 2006, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) released new guidelines on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism for financial institutions and non-financial businesses and professionals. In August 2006, Zimbabwe assumed the Presidency for the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) for the 2006/2007 administrative year. Zimbabwe, however, has yet to become a party to the UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

SAFE HAVEN ASSESSMENT

¶13. (SBU) Given the country's oppressive and omnipresent security and intelligence agencies, the GOZ is well-positioned to be aware of any terrorist activities on its territory. There is no credible evidence that Zimbabwe is being used as a safe haven or that the GOZ provides sanctuary to any international or indigenous terrorist group.

The GOZ does, however, maintain diplomatic relations with countries identified as being state sponsors of terrorism. Cuba, Iran, Libya, and Sudan have embassies in Harare and there is an emerging North Korean diplomatic presence. Additionally, President Robert Mugabe visited both Cuba and Iran in 2006.

INFORMATION ON TERRORIST GROUPS

¶4. (SBU) No terrorist cells were identified in Zimbabwe by the GOZ in 2006 and Post has no reason to believe that any are active in the country. To date, Zimbabwe has not been a good operating environment for terrorist groups due to the country's aggressive security and intelligence apparatus. This operating environment may, however, become more appealing to terrorists if the capabilities of these agencies continue to be eroded by the country's deteriorating economic conditions.

INFORMATION ON FOREIGN GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

¶5. (SBU) Although the GOZ has not been requested to cooperate in the investigation or prosecution of any terrorist act within the past five years, there exist no known impediments to host government prosecution and/or extradition of suspected terrorists. Additionally, as noted in paragraph 2, Zimbabwe currently holds the Presidency for ESAAMLG and hosted the group's Council of Ministers of Finance meeting in August. Also in August, Zimbabwe and Republic of South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding for the exchange of information in combating money laundering and financing of terrorism.

¶6. (U) Post's terrorism reporting officer is Political Officer Scott C. Higgins. His telephone number is (263) (4) 250-593 ext 321 and email addresses are HigginsSC@state.gov (unclassified) and HigginsSC@state.sgov.gov (classified).
SCHULTZ